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DEFAMATION
OF THE
CHURCHES AND MINISTERS
OF
CHRIST,
contrary to
THE SPIRIT OF THE GOSPEL.

IN
Some Remarks
ON THE
False Insinuations of Mr. HUNTINGTON:

IN A LATE PUBLICATION,
ENTITLED
“ Discoveries and Cautions from the Streets of Zion.”

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND,
BY RICHARD LEGGETT.

Thy speech bewrayeth thee.—Mat. xxvi. 73.

A foul tongue shews ever a rotten heart.—Bp. HALL on the
Deceit of Appearance.

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DEFAMATION, &c.

DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,

IN compliance with your desire, I have brought my mind with a degree of reluctance, to make some remarks on the publication of Mr. H. Hoping that with a divine blessing, it may have its use on the minds of some professors of religion in these parts, who have been corrupted from the simplicity of Christ; as to the meek and lowly influence, the real doctrines of the gospel will invariably have, on the spirit and conversation of all who properly receive them. I fear it is too hard a task, for any christian minister, to restore the minds of many of Mr. H's admirers and followers to the frame they were once known to be in, as peaceful and profitable members of several christian churches. Slander, defamation, and the infallible dictates, of their great lord of judgment and conscience, have more power to persuade, than either reason, scripture, or the best informed judgment. With them censoriousness is judiciousness, a certain sourness of temper, against all who differ from Mr. H's christian zeal, and a necessary temper to defend the truth, and discountenance, what they suppose, errors in others. Contemptuous disdain, and a supercilious carriage towards other professors not of their class and temper, is esteemed a necessary caution, to guard them against the influence of the leaven of our hypocrisy, and pharisaical doctrines. Instead of meekly endeavouring to instruct us, and call our wandering feet back to the paths of grace and peace, we are branded with the most opprobrious terms, and accounted the most dangerous guides in divine things, page 70 and 13. This is the spirit that governs the major part of Mr. H's followers, which you have had an opportunity of observing in many, who have turned away their ears

from you, and other ministers, and are now deeply drunk in his spirit; who may be considered as the instrumental cause of the injury done to their minds: for certain I am this spirit is not the spirit of the gospel, but Antinomianism; and I fear has led several of them into an unprofitable conversation, and a disorderly walk, inconsistent with the temper and fruits of that love, so necessary to constitute the real christian character.

“ Soft peace *ſhe* brings where ever ſhe arrives :

“ She builds our quiet, as ſhe forms our lives ;

“ Lays the rough paths of peeviſh nature even ;

“ And opens in each heart a little heaven.”

To judge of this spirit, needs no great acquaintance with ſcripture, or religion. The world itſelf ſhall decide whether this is the ſpirit of chriſtianity. “ They know that meekneſs, humility, and love, are the characteristics of a chriſtian temper; and though they affect to treat the doctrines of grace as mere notions and ſpeculations, which, ſuppoſing they adopted them, would have no ſalutary influence upon their conduct; yet from us, who profeſs theſe principles, they always expect ſuch diſpoſitions, as correſpond with the precepts of the goſpel. They are quick ſighted to diſcern when we deviate from ſuch a ſpirit, and avail themſelves of it, to juſtify their contempt of our arguments. The ſcriptural maxim that, “ The wrath of man worketh not the righteouſneſs of God,” is verified by daily obſervation. If our zeal is imbittered by expreſſions of anger, inveſtive, or ſcorn, we may think we are doing ſervice to the cauſe of truth, when in reality we ſhall only bring it into diſcredit. The weapons of our warfare, and which alone are powerful to break down the ſtrong holds of error, are not carnal, but ſpiritual; arguments fairly drawn from ſcripture and experience, and enforced by ſuch a mild addreſs, as may perſuade our readers, that whether we convince them or not, we wiſh well to their ſouls, and contend only for truth’s ſake. Not to ſtrive, but in meekneſs to inſtruct thoſe who oppoſe themſelves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth.” This is not the temper that prevails among them,

is too obvious to need a moment's hesitation. There is not a christian church, which has been troubled with them, whom Mr. H. calls "half starved," and "quite starved," p. 10. while hypocrites are fed and nourished up in their presumption, but has experienced these poor hungry, quite starved souls, to be a contentious wrangling company of disputants, who, having imbibed his spirit, are calculated to breed discord and uneasiness; and, where they have had it in their power, to separate chief friends, destroy the peace of Zion, and wound deeply the hearts of several pious disinterested ministers of Christ, under the pretence that their pastors and affectionate followers, were bastard Calvinists, Arminians, and secret enemies to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. I have myself known some of them, and you more, that furnish sufficient demonstration, from their conversation and manners before men, they have lost the beauty and simplicity of a former profession, and are now loquacious disputers, censorious judges of what is orthodox or otherwise, and, after having highly esteemed the instruments of their former edification, now look upon them in the light of deceivers and impostors.

I would ask such persons as these, what proof they have from scripture, that they who are under the influence of such a temper have the spirit of Christ? Did it ever appear in him, or in his apostles, or in any who have been singularly owned of God? they kept within the bounds of that temper which is always distinguished by love and charity, and exercises itself in meekness and moderation. Was not the great Redeemer meek and lowly? who, when he was reviled, reviled not again. Did he speak evil of any man?—deal in slander and wicked insinuations? Compare the spirit of Paul with that of Mr. H. and see what likeness: The one is patient towards all men, and his conversation such as becometh the gospel of Christ; the other indulges a foul mouth, his language calculated to inflame the spirits of his readers, he deals in low quaint language, abusive epithets of hypocrites, impostors, wolves, who have consented with thieves and robbers, pages 14, 18, and such like terms of reproach. He can

indiscriminately charge with sedition and condemn whole bodies of christians and societies, who are piously endeavouring to propagate the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; charge them with designs to introduce popery, and as secretly endeavouring to subvert every thing sacred in civil authority; as well as to corrupt the gospel, and betray its sacred truths into the hands of Jesuits and Papists, and as forming confederacies and coalitions with Arians, Socinians, Sabellians, Arminians, pages 18, 17, 14, 38, 54, 40, 70. These false insinuations and charges are so interlined and connected in this discourse, that it must appear to every unprejudiced reader who it is he applies them to.—“The evangelical society are for the most part in the trap of Tom Paine, or that of John Wesley,” page 18, “so that these likewise have been promising to themselves, week by week, liberty by the sword of France, and by the destruction of their own country.”—These have hoped in Buonaparte, and the Irish Papists, page 15. Such is the vile spirit of Mr. H. This is the influence, his vastly superior knowledge in the mysteries of the gospel has on him. This is the man, who is supposed by many of his infatuated followers, to have more grace, discernment, and gifts, than any other in the kingdom; of such spiritual sagacity, that he alone can find out, that the generality of our watchmen are stone blind; who are so far from going about the city, that they do not know the way into it, page 13. But is this, sir, the spirit of Christ? Is it derived from an acquaintance with the gospel? Do any of its doctrines lead to it, promote it, or give it the least countenance? Let any man whatever, who has the smallest acquaintance with the scriptures, prove it has any connection with the temper of Christianity, or the welfare of it; and if it has not, then it must be the wisdom from beneath, earthly, sensual, devilish, Jam. iii. 15. The influence of the old serpent, and so after all the wonderful discoveries his writings are supposed to convey, we have this mighty champion, and extraordinary man, destitute of the plainest facts of Christianity in his temper, Jam. iii, 17, 18. and as yet to learn some of those lessons, which Christ teaches his people

on the lowest forms of his school, Col. iii. 12. Gal. v. 22. or to hope the best of him, is a mere dwarf in the school of the gospel, whose knowledge has never yet taught him to govern his temper, and deserves the censure the Apostle gave the Corinthians, 1 Cor. iii. 3. walking in carnal policy, and under the direction of a self righteous spirit. Who is a wise man in scripture language? The question is asked by a man, inspired and infallible, he shall return an answer, and we may depend on his decision in opposition to all equivocation.—It is him that shews, out of a good conversation, his works with meekness of wisdom, Jam. iii. 13. His conversation is a wise conversation because it is a meek one, his tongue is not a sharp sword to wound the credit, and inflame the corruptions of others. With the lowly is wisdom, Prov. xi. 2. and with the angry and abusive is folly, Ecc. x. 12, 13.

Did the inspired writers deal with those, that even corrupted the truth, as Mr. H. and his followers do with us? and with all who measure not with the rule of their infallible judgments? The apostle Paul uses mild and alluring language with the Galatians, who had departed essentially from the simplicity of the gospel: he calls them his little children, of whom he travailed in birth again till Christ should be formed in them, ch. iv. 19.—calls them brethren, ch. iii. 15. and recommends a tender deportment to those overtaken in a fault, Gal. vi. 1. to restore them in the spirit of meekness. Mr. H. and his followers profess to contend for the purity of scripture; let them hear it, and it convicts them of error: it gives not the least countenance to their spirit, but every where condemns it, as dishonorable to a profession of the faith of Christ, and attributes this temper to Satan, and the carnal hearts of men, 1 John ii. 11. Jam. iii. 14. The primitive christians laboured to give no offence in any thing; but in much patience to approve themselves of God, 2 Cor. vi. 3, 4. by pureness, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, and by the word of truth. Being reviled, they blessed; being persecuted, they suffered it; being defamed, they intreated, 1 Cor. iv. 12, 13. They drank into that charity that suffereth

long and is kind; which vaunteth not itself; was not puffed up with imaginary conceits of its own superior attainments, or suffered others to stifle the possessors of it, as knowing more than others who had gone before them for ages, as Mr. H's fulsome flatterers have done in the letter prefixed to this harangue, and occasioned its procession from the press.

The grace of God in the heart, teaches the subjects of it to speak evil of no man; nor even of their practices, unless evil, and then to be satisfied with positive proof, and is very far, without the smallest provocation being given, as in this publication, to condemn by hundreds, the principles and practices of pious characters, and impute to them wickedness, equal to rebels and seditious persons, that have been hanged, transported, and imprisoned. If this is charity and meekness, what an high esteem is this man worthy to be held in, who abounds in it so much, that it drops from his lips and pen with unpremeditated effusion, and is reckoned by his hearers, worthy of being recorded for the edification of future ages! O blind and deluded persons, who can sit and hear such wonderful discoveries, with the scriptures in your hands, expressed in such abusive language, that is calculated only for the spirits and mouths of men, who have no fear of God before their eyes, or any knowledge of their own hearts. How strange must be your illumination, that can reconcile such a spirit, and such language, to the example and temper of the holy Jesus, and every pious character recorded in God's word. If you are still to learn what the temper is, recommended in the scriptures, hear them. A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger, Prov. xv. 1. Haughty scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath, Prov. xxi. 24. He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly, Prov. xiv. 29. Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, Matt. xi. 29. If it be possible as much as in you lieth, live peaceable with all men, Rom. xii. 18, &c.

I hope, my dear friend, that in writing thus, I do not charge Mr. H. and his followers in general wrong-

fully, nor have I wilfully misrepresented them. My ideas are not imaginary, if a series of years observation, and my occasionally looking over his numerous fancifully titled books, may be depended on. I have often reluctantly acceded to the censures of others on them; but this last publication cannot be mistaken, it exceeds in scurrility, and pretended discoveries, all that have preceded it. It appears he was wrapt from the ordinary pitch of men, and, like another Mahomet, has had information from the upper world, by even a voice from God himself, page 16. One should have suspected, that such high mysteries and familiarity with the Deity, would have laid him exceeding low in his own eyes, and infused an extraordinary degree, of all that is lowly, meek, and kind into him, and should have so governed his language and pen, as to have convinced his readers, by the purity and persuasiveness of his conversation, that God was with him of a truth; for such were the effects, peculiar discoveries of God and his will, formerly produced in the persons so highly distinguished; but how strangely are we mistaken, after being so highly honoured of God, and with such wonderful assurance of his infallibility, as to be able to challenge all the hypocrites in Zion, all his enemies in Britain, nor even time itself, to prove him a false prophet or make his prediction a lie, page 72; he comes into the pulpit more like a wolf, and appears to dwell with pleasure on halters, prisons, and armies, and pours forth a variety of scurrilous epithets on the ministers of the gospel, in language calculated to call forth the extreme jealousy of the civil powers; insinuating as much as if we were in league with the open and avowed enemies of government, and in plots to betray the gospel and its truths, into the hands of papists; that we are vending false doctrines in thousands of sermons continually; attributing the missionary society to a human invention, obliquely charging the missionaries themselves, who have gone among the heathen, with seditious principles, withheld from the subversion of the governments they are under, more from self preservation, than any principle of conscience, pages 15, 70, 8, 9, 11, 13, 36, 44. This is the conversation of this

highly favoured man in gifts and grace, and such are the effects of his wonderful illumination ! Was I not acquainted with the extreme blindness of the human mind, in the things of God, and that numbers in every age of the church, have been more inclined to listen to imposture than truth, and to be deceived, rather than receive that connection God has established between truth and its influence on the mind ; it would be hard to believe, that any professors, should receive this fulsome stuff upon the footing of prophecies and revelations, of an extraordinary nature, and be so infatuated with this malevolent spirit, that if they are deceived, they will still believe all he says, and not even attend to others, whom they are thus taught to consider as enemies to the gospel of Christ : surely if we did not expect miracles, as attestations of such new discoveries, which are so certainly to come to pass, that all are to prove liars, and he alone be true, we might at least have expected that the words of the prophet, should have been words of meekness and wisdom ; and words of truth, Ecc. xii. 10. such as were calculated to have taught the people knowledge, and manifested the grace of God in the speaker and writer of them. He tells us, page 31, that love is on the side of those who fight under the banner of faith : but where is that love manifested in him ?—Is it to be found in a single page of this wonderful sermon, either in the language or in the spirit of it, though he was more than ordinarily under the banner of faith, against such a host of enemies, both at home and abroad ? Surely if any meaning be in words, and they are to be considered as the index of the temper, and disposition of mind a man is in, nothing of this temper is to be found, and so while he is preaching and writing about the doctrines of the gospel, he is separating what God has joined together, and defending the truth in an unrighteous spirit. A manifest contradiction to the plain precept of the apostle. Eph. iv. 15. Surely his numerous writings never yet exhibited this beautiful assemblage ; a sour, narrow, uncharitable spirit pervades them ; and as similar causes will produce similar effects, we know this sour and unchristian temper, pervades the minds of his

adherents in all places, that have been so unfortunate as to produce them, and that they have manifested open hostility against this blessed temper, and endeavour to infuse their own, into others peaceably disposed to profit by their own ministers; so that to be of their party, and to have an inimical spirit to the happiness of other churches, are now synonymous. These things, my dear friend, are so obvious to you, that no proof is necessary of a personal nature. You have known some, who formerly would have plucked out their eyes (if possible) and given them to you, and their zealous affection might have still continued, unless they had been corrupted from the *meekness* that is in Christ. And it is equally certain, that no eminent servant of Christ, (which he would be thought to be,) was ever under the influence of it. Compare their writings with those of Mr. H. Does a Hervy, a Whitfield, an Erskine, a Romaine, a Hart, persons greatly owned of God, and very strenuous for the doctrines of grace, speak and write in his spirit? Have not even persons been obliged to acknowledge, that the affection and fervour manifested in their writings, have been the means of inclining them, to attend to the truths of God contained in them. Their affections have been drawn to the light, and not disgusted at it, which would certainly be the case, had they used unchristian tempers and language. The weapons of the world not of the christian.

The spirit of God is a spirit of truth, not only to inform the judgment; but to impregnate and sweeten the mind, with the seeds of lowliness and meekness. Eph. v. 22. It promotes affection for the family of God, struggling under corruption, and exposed to error. And when sensible of the depravity of our natures; our liableness to err; the weakness of our judgments; the legal bias of our minds, to corrupt the simplicity of the grace of Jesus, as it reigns triumphantly and freely in our salvation, we shall be tender of them, who are equally engaged in the same warfare. "He that is strong, (which Mr. H. wishes to be thought) can well bear the infirmities of the weak. He that is weak, cannot bear at all, but

is overwhelmed with his own," which he evidently is. See the numerous exhortations we have to this disposition of mind, enforced with the utmost tenderness, and exemplified with a bright example in the first general epistle of John. Compare the spirit of this epistle with Mr. H. and how great the disparity! What a perfect contrast. The one appears to be impregnated deeply with the law of kindness; the other, like Ishmael, is in open war with the churches and ministers of the gospel, as if he had got a commission to charge them with the basest disloyalty, against the King of heaven to unchurch them, and to pronounce the curses of heaven against them. Such a contradiction is in his spirit; and that extraordinary zeal he professes to have for the doctrines of grace, that he is neither one thing or the other, and needs rescuing from the bats himself, as well as his cousin, being at present only fit for persons of his own peculiar kind. Men of ugly unchristian tempers, with whom no others must, or can have any communion. May you, Sir, be preserved from such a spirit, and warn your people against it, as subversive of all that union which is necessary, for their mutual profit and edification, from the various gifts God has distributed in his church, and among the ministers of it. Phil. ii. 2, 3. 1 Cor. xii. 27, 28. That they may learn to speak the truth in love, and constrain others to acknowledge, whether they believe us or not, our tempers are consistent with our doctrines, and not at variance with them.

Mr. H. is not the first who, has pretended great illumination, and extraordinary discoveries in divine things, who have in many other respects manifested an unacquaintedness with their own hearts. Gifts and grace are widely different. There is nothing so sacred in the words and letters of scripture; but they may be stored up in the memory, and understood by the ordinary conception of our minds; and yet our hearts remain unchanged, and our tempers uninfluenced by them. The christian world has exhibited too many lamentable proofs of this, to the great scandal and injury of the cause of Christ. In the lips of such, the truths

of God have the same kind of analogy as a jewel in a swine's snout. "The spiritual understanding of the scripture, does not consist in opening to the mind, or the minds of others, the mystical meaning of scripture, in its parables, types, and allegories;" in which Mr. H. is a great adept. Many men can explain these types, &c. who have no scriptural knowledge. "It is possible a man may know how to interpret all the types, parables, enigmas, and allegories in the bible, and not have one beam of scriptural light in the mind." It is plain by what the Apostle says, that a man might understand all these mysteries, and have no saving grace, 1 Cor. xiii. 2. A man may be adorned with many gifts, in preaching and prayer, and yet be destitute of the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit; in God's sight a great price. Mr. H's followers in this, are certainly under an error: their admiration of him, must arise from his ability to explain these mysteries; from the fanciful construction he puts on many passages of scripture, which none ever presumed but himself; from that dictatorial and infallible form in which they are delivered from the press and pulpit; and that facility of address, and expertness in producing a chain of scriptures. This is the foundation of that popularity, which he has gained among a number of his followers. But is this all that should raise a preacher in our esteem? are jingling words, quaint speeches, vulgar witticisms, and quibbling arguments, to have the same authority, or superior esteem, to the spirit and temper of Jesus? Paul beseeches the Corinthians by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, 2 Cor. x. 1. not by his gifts and apostolic authority. So also he exhorts the Philippians to unity, by the consolations of Christ, by the comfort of love, by the fellowship of the spirit, by bowels and mercies, Phil. ii. 1. These were what he would build his authority on, and gain his esteem by. But all this can be dispensed with in Mr. H. the temper of the gospel relinquished, the bonds of all christian fellowship and union broken through, and indulgences in scurrility and defamation allowed in him; and yet held up in the character of a most wonderfully favoured man of God, anointed above his fellows in gifts and grace. The im-

pressing divine things, on the hearts and affections of men, is evidently one great and main end of the gifts of the ministry; not singly to inform the judgment, but to move the affections, and excite them to a suitable disposition towards God and man. The end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and faith unfeigned, 1 Tim. i. 5. To bring me into that lowliness and humility, becoming a sinner all the days of my life, to that pure and disinterested love of God, for all his kindness and love expressed in the person and grace of his dear Son, and likewise to love all men, and seek their good, in a wise unblameable conversation, endeavouring to win and allure them, to consider the importance of the things of God, by that amiableness of spirit, that always accompanies a real and cordial reception of them. The gospel is to be propagated among men, not in a heat and passion, but in tenderness and sympathy; not in ostentatious pride, but in a humble carriage. He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets, Matt. xii. 19. And let the most flaming zealot, with a noon-day judgment in divine things, pretend what he may, all his gifts are but as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, his preaching is mere verbal oratory, and his gifts of superior discernment mere airy fancies. The words of grace should be spoken with grace; and not in our own passions and sinful tempers. I have for some years past looked upon all that politeness and suavity of manners, the mutual exchange of which is so necessary a part of good breeding, as a very imperfect copy of the spirit of christianity: How amiable must then be the thing itself! and in proportion as it prevails, it certainly will render us courteous, 1 Pet. iii. 8. kindly affectioned, Rom. xii. 10. of a sweet conversation, in opposition to moroseness, Eph. iv. 29. to refrain our tongues from evil, and our lips from speaking guile, 1 Pet. iii. 10. I have been reading my bible many years, and never yet could find a religion there, that made a man use scurrilous language, and allow himself in an ill temper; especially when standing as a representative of Christ, before sinful and imperfect men; when all

ought to be solemn, in spirit, in words, in address. Grace will ever teach a good man every thing ornamental to the truths of the gospel; what is opposite, will always proceed from the unmortified corruptions of our own sinful and polluted hearts. When I have beheld the malevolent and unhappy spirits of many professors of the gospel, and smarted under them, I have admired the beautiful but affecting complaint of a poet:

“ But where with men shall heavenly love be found,
 “ Does it with antient saints lie under ground.
 “ Sure with the living little do we see,
 “ Dear Lord, give more, and O begin with me.”

One gross imperfection in a man's religious profession, is frequently attended with others; truth and error will never combine. It requires little discernment to see the vanity and conceit which characterize this new performance; especially the cause of its being ushered into the world, for which unborn posterity will be, it seems, indebted to four of Mr. H's hearers: *whose* judgment of it is so great, that it is calculated for the elect people of God in future ages, consequently in the millenium state of the church of Christ. What they are to learn by it, I am at a loss to find out, my apprehension is so dull, in comparison to these *judicious* hearers. I am apprehensive, however, if our gracious posterity will have the humility that all gracious persons are endowed with, and I believe they will, they will stumble at the threshold of the temple, in which the idol is placed, and smell something not very savory to their tender minds. However inferior my judgment is to Mr. H. and his friends, who have discernment to spare for unborn posterity, I think I can discover a visible defect in theirs, and no great acquaintance with the human heart. My bible tells me that one of God's works with man, is to hide pride from him, Job. xxxiii. 17. and that if any man thinketh he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing as he ought to know, 1 Cor. viii. 2. An apostle when he is caught up into the third heaven, &c. 2 Cor. xii. 2. *conceals himself*, and says he knew a man in Christ, and lest he should be puffed up

above measure, knowing the deceitfulness of his heart, God sent a messenger of Satan to buffet him, that he might glory in his infirmities, not in his revelations. But what do you think, sir, Paul would have said to four of his hearers, after one of his sermons, if they had met him at the pulpit stairs, and accosted him in this manner: "We have heard the word this night from your mouth, not as the word of the man who delivered it, but as of God, who we are well *convinced gave it you*; and as *we know* it concerns not us only, but the elect of God *at large*, and the rising generation that are to succeed us, we wish it to be spread in the present day, and handed down to those whom it may concern, when time with us is no more. *With this view*, having reason to bless our gracious God for condescending so eminently to enlighten, teach, and instruct you, so as to cause you to go not only before us, but before any we have heard or known of, either in the present day, or for ages past, we wish you to be at the trouble to write down, as nearly as you can, the sermon this evening delivered, and to permit us four to be at the expence of printing and publishing the same," &c. pages 3, 4. Would Paul, think you, have treated these persons in any other manner, than as dangerous sycophants and flatterers?—Would he have suffered such windy words without reproving them?—Would he not have admonished them, such language was only calculated to breed in him a high conceit of his knowledge, and that if any benefit had been received, to go and give silently the glory to God?—Or would he not have sharply reprov'd them; in a similar manner, an eminent minister of Christ once did a foolish woman, who was commending him immediately on his coming out of the pulpit, how excellently he had preached! by replying, "The devil told me so before you." I ask you, sir, who have often heard yourself praised by such ignorant persons, if they might be supposed to have meant well, what effect such speeches have produced in you?—Have they not made you swell with ideas of your own importance? while at the same time, if you have been silent towards such weak Christians, you have looked on them as little ac-

quainted with the human heart. But what, sir, would others have thought of you, if you had published these sermons to the world, and told it, that a V. L., M. C., E. T. and an O. T*. had exalted you above the shoulders of all your brethren; yea, and above the shoulders of whole ages, and that it was your own opinion of yourself? (for when a man has received a high character from others, and prints it for the benefit of the present and future ages, you know he has made it his own, and looks on himself in the light in which he is set forth.) What should I think of my friend in such a case as this?—Why I should certainly have a much lower opinion of his knowledge and humility, than I had formerly, and that he had certainly forgot such passages of scripture, as speak of self-exaltation, as evidencing a proud unhumbed spirit. For he that exalteth himself shall be abased, &c. Luke xiv. 11. Not he that commendeth himself is approved; but whom the Lord commendeth, 2 Cor. x. 18. Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth (or I may say not thine own pen) a stranger and not thine own lips, Prov. xxvii. 2. He is a real Jew, whose praise is not of men but of God, Rom. ii. 29. The scripture, sir, is decidedly against this windy conceited spirit in man, and every where speaks of such, as being under a delusion, strangers to their own hearts. Wells without water, speaking great swelling words of vanity, 2 Pet. ii. 17, 18. Simon gave out that *himself* was some great one. The great power of God; such a one as had not appeared for ages, full of high and mysterious matter, calculated to raise the admiration of a whole city, Acts viii. 9, 10. He that hath knowledge, spareth his words, Prov. xvii. 27. Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding, (he does not stir it up, and spread it abroad to magnify himself,) but that which is in the midst of fools is made known, Prov. xiv. 33. “A truly eminent person is not apt to think himself eminent in any thing; all his gifts, graces, and experiences, are ready to appear to him to be comparatively small.” “He is a thousand times

* Names subscribed to the letter.

more quick-sighted to discern his pride, than his humility." "Whereas a Pharisee's trumpet shall be heard to the town's end, while simplicity walks through the town unseen." "Hence a man will covertly commend himself (under the signatures of others) and every now and then, *myself*, and *I*, comes in; and the secret meaning of all is, I pray admire me," what a wonderful enlightened man I am, how superior my judgment in the mysteries of the Revelations, to the profoundly learned Mede, the laborious Gill, and the judicious Lowman, or any who have appeared in the world for a number of years, whose discoveries are so bright and vigorous, that they are to reach to distant ages for their instruction. I hope, as these wonderful discoveries are of such importance to the future edification of the church of God, that Mr. H. and his friends will take great care they may be deposited in some public library, that is likely to stand through the present devastation of nations; and for the better security of them, that a memorandum may be made in some public records, that in the year 1798, a Mr. H. published a sermon, he preached extemporaneous, that contains information to future ages, not to be had in any other publication that ever preceded it.—A wonderful sermon, that obliged thousands at the time it was published, which in the judgment of *four persons*, concerns the elect of God in all kingdoms, nations, and languages; or if any library or public record might not be thought of sufficient security, for the preservation of so *interesting* a publication, that his four friends, on whose judgment all the elect at large will rely, without calling in question their infallibility, would be *indeed* so liberal, as to have this sermon printed in all known languages, that it may truly in their day, *without any expence to the public*, be scattered among the Europeans, Asiatics, Africans, and Americans, and then there may be a probability, that it may not slip into oblivion, which is the unhappy fate of many productions, especially pamphlets.

Truly, my dear friend, of all the prefatory dedications, commendatory letters, and prefaces I have seen before books, to my best remembrance, I never saw or

read the equal to this. Small must be the spiritual knowledge and discernment of any professor of the grace of God, not to see the fulsomeness, pride, and conceit of it, and with all Mr. H's gifts, and superior discernment, he appears to me, from this very letter, to be that proud, self-sufficient egotist, which is manifest from his writings in general, and which, if I thought any so stupid as to want evidence, might be produced in numerous quotations from them.

Can all Mr. H's followers be so blind as not to discern the spirit of the man, or see the utter inconsistency of such self-importance, and its contrast, to that meek and self denying temper, that invariably follows an acquaintance with the human heart? Is not this folly and self-esteem? Can any humble man, after this manifestation of fulsome pride, not have a suspicion arise in the breast, that this great and extraordinary man, is not the man he would have himself believed to be? Do they not know that a truly humble man, is always learning to know he is nothing? I truly feel for any of his followers, that they should be so blind to the temper of real grace, and that they should continue to feed such spiritual pride. I have and do deplore the wretched taste of such hearers, and am fully convinced in my own mind, that among the lamentable evidences we have of the degenerate days we live in, that this is one. It is, indeed, very lamentable, that bold and confident assertions, fanciful and allegorical expositions of God's word, mixed with judging and condemning, with opprobrious names, whole sects and parties of professing Christians, should have more weight with such, than the preaching and writings of those, who to the purity of doctrine, unite the amiable spirit of genuine Christianity. "Grace is slow to speak, and slow to wrath; wishes to hear, and learn, and understand; delights not to be in the chief seat, but is constant with the lowest; and had rather lay up spiritual treasure in the heart, than babble it away for selfish aims, with the tongue," Christian Remembrancer, Page 166.

The letter that occasioned this sermon to be published, and the sermon itself, are of the same com-

plexion. We are complimented with infallibility at its very entrance. The church of Sardis was certainly a type or figure of the church of God in the present day, page 5. This is the foundation of the whole discourse. And in the third of Revelations, from the 1st to the 5th verse, we are taught, that the human invention of the Missionary Society; the language of some well-meaning persons, crying up the liveliness of a minister of a congregation, who are in the esteem of this charitable man, only canting hypocrites, and who, to use his own expressions, " May say, for I never heard to my knowledge, the precise expressions before; such a precious soul is coming up, and preaches his first sermon, at lo here! Such-a-one takes his leave, at lo there! not one in fifty of whom, either describe or enforce divine life. Many of whom are obliged to have recourse to an organ, before a little glee can be raised; others of them study oratory to move the passions; others kept in life by abusing the civil powers; others cry up the majesty of the Jacobins; others of them blacken the gospel with opprobrious names," pages 8, 9. This, sir, we are taught to believe, is contained in the church of Sardis, as a type of the present day, and is the wonderful exposition (upon Mr. H's ipse dixit) of those words, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." These things were, according to him, typified by the church of Sardis, and are what we must understand, as the instruction of the Holy Ghost. The discoveries of which, to thousands in the present day, and future ages, we are indebted to him for. Can you believe these things are couched under these words? or that the Holy Spirit ever intended them? If you can, you are prepared to believe they are contained in the first chapter of Genesis; or any where the luxuriant fancy of Mr. H. is pleased to place them. Is it possible that any should be so ignorant, or rather presumptuous, seriously to credit this exposition of the words? which are only made a vehicle, pro tempore, for the succrillity of this man, on the Missionary Society; on the churches and ministers of Christ; to charge them falsely with hypocrisy, carnal policy, false devotion, sedition, Jacobinism, and ridiculing the gospel with opprobrious

terms. Is it even any exposition of the words at all, calculated to inform the judgment, or admonish a professing Christian, in the state the church of Sardis was in, with a view of rescuing him from his spiritual lethargy and formality? Are the marks of these evils laid down, and suitable exhortations enforced on the mind of such? which I am humbly persuaded was the intention of the Holy Ghost to all succeeding churches, and persons in a similar condition. No; all is innatured censure; the language of an uncharitable tongue; and the design of it, to render other churches and ministers, as odious as possible, to his auditory and readers, to keep up, by these arts, the ascendancy too long maintained over those whom he has influenced by his unchristian temper. These, sir, are only specimens of the mighty discoveries made to the world in this sermon. What an unfortunate thing for his credit as a prophet, that such, instead of being discoveries of God, are another striking evidence of the badness of his own spirit, and manifest, how little he is acquainted with his own heart, in making the serious things of God, and in a serious character, as an ambassador of Christ, a cover and cloak for that prejudice he appears to have against the ministers of the Lord Christ in general. Such railing accusations, I am persuaded by my bible, are not of the Lord; he gives us a different example, with the worst of beings, the devil. Michael, the archangel, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, the Lord rebuke thee, Jude 9. But neither the example of Christ, contending about the body of Moses, nor the moral law as a rule, is any guide to him in his censures on others, and I am sure we must go to him to learn the spirit of the gospel, which when it suits him in theory, he tells us is love. How different is his practice!

He tells us that Sardis was certainly a type of the church in our day. Mr. H. I suppose does not claim the discovery, that the seven churches, were typical of different states of the church of Christ to the end of time. If his hearers suppose so, and that this is a part of his wonderful light, it is necessary to inform them, that it is an old idea, I believe now generally explod-

ed; and the contrary sentiment generally adopted by the best expositors, except we reckon Mr. H. superior to any which have elucidated the mysteries of the Apocalypse. Dr. Guyse observes, "That the same admonitions, added to the close of every epistle to the seven churches, intimates that the things wrote therein, are to be applied to all other churches, in every place, and age; so far as their state and condition is like that of the churches, to which either of these epistles is addressed; but I cannot think that the different states of succeeding churches, would fall out just in the same order of time, as answers to the order of these epistles." However, had Mr. H. only made it an hypothesis, he is welcome to it, for it is only a borrowed one; but hypotheses he has none, all his assertions are dogmatisms, his people must not know any thing from his lips, but infallibility. That important letter *I* is a fruitful, a repeated, a necessary ornament, in the stile of his productions. But how happy he is, and consistent in the reason he assigns, for Sardis being typical of the coming state of the church, which shews us the universal spread of the gospel, page 5. Is this the next state of the church? He tells us that popery is spreading both at home and abroad, page 42. and will spread, that the hypocrites in our Zion may be gained over to the Papists, and the Catholics must come into office, and into power, that the toleration acts may universally be taken away, page 40, 41. That Arians, Socinians, Sabellians, Arminians, and those who have for some time held the truth in unrighteousness, are now collecting; for he sees all dark things, having a very *penetrating* eye, into one heap of materials, which will, ere long, be used, to build up, and complete the Tower of Babylon. "Upon this ground, the whore of Babylon will flourish." Then shall the power of the holy people be scattered, the sun shall go down, and the earth shall be darkened in the clear day. Then will the holy of holies be ransacked a third time, and the witnesses for truth be slain, page 43. Surely this cannot agree with the present state of the church, nor yet, according to his own scheme, with that of Philadelphia; and so, in conjunction with other in-

consistencies of this enlightening discourse, we have him at variance with his own plan.

Whatever may be the issue of the present scenes of Providence, I pretend not to determine. The Great Ruler of the nation has not told me, but expressly cautioned us, and Mr. H. too, against all such speculations which obtrude into things we have not seen, Col. ii. 18. It is not for us to know the times and seasons, the Father has put in his own power, Acts, i. 7. And I am persuaded that no modest and humble enquirer after truth, will ever venture to tell the world, in the language of *assurance*, what Popish priests are to do after this hour of temptation has subsided, page 41. That the present work of God on earth *will be* carrying on seventy years, but that before 1870 it will be completed. Certainly, if Mr. H. had been under prophetic influence in these positive assertions, he would have been consistent with himself, there would have been a harmony in his discoveries, which it is obvious there is not.

My reading and observation have taught me the fallacy of historizing the prophetic parts of God's word unaccomplished: and I do look on that man, as wanting humility and judgment, who presumes to fix epochs and periods to God's predictions: For secret things, (and such are times and seasons) belong to the Lord our God, Deut. xxix. 29.

Whether Popery shall be again established; whether the witnesses are yet to be slain; or, whether the present dispensations of Providence, are tending to the utter and irrecoverable downfall of Popery, and are the immediate forerunners of the glorious establishment of the kingdom of Christ on the earth, and universal spread of the gospel, I believe, are as much concealed from Mr. H. as they are from me. To determine whether of these are to come to pass, deserves the censure once given to a curious enquirer into futurity: What is that to thee; follow thou me, John xxi. 21. 22.

Having laid it down as an indisputable dogma, that Sardis is the present state of the church, he endeavours to preserve his analogy. Strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die, Rev. iii. 2. What, my

friend, have you supposed these things to be that are ready to die (i. e. in appearance) but the works that God had not found *perfect* before him!—Upright, sincere, not abounding in them, or doing them in the manner, spirit, and design of pure evangelical obedience, as evidences of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. The want of a lively exercise in these things, we know is the cause of a cold and languid profession, after great zeal and warm affection for the cause, truths, and people of God: instances of which we have in scripture;—among all congregations;—even, I suppose, in Mr. H's, which is so superior to others in spiritual light and life. The Holy Spirit tells us what these things are: the works of the professors at Sardis, which needed reviving as poor withering plants, ready to expire, that they might evidence they were indeed alive to God. The latter part of the verse is explanatory of the former: For I have not found thy works perfect before God, Rev. iii. 2. plainly telling them, the things ready to die were their works, gifts, and appearances of a gracious state.

But could it ever have entered into the head of any one, except Mr. H, that these things were vessels of mercy in the furnace of affliction, half starved for want of the bread and water of life, and nothing to attend upon, but wells without water; clouds without rain; and shepherds who cannot understand? that are obliged to go from city to city to find food, but all in vain. And there is scarce a large town in the nation, but where you will find, here and there, a little company sensible of their lost state, labouring in bondage and misery, but none to feed them; hypocrites are fed and nourished up in their presumption, and such as these are quite starved, page 10. That is, sir, in plain English, that in all large towns almost, there are a few of Mr. H's followers, who cannot profit under the ministry of their former worthy pastors, having had their minds perverted from the simplicity of the gospel, by reading and hearing such unnatural, unprecedented expositions of scripture, as this specimen of the things which remained in the church at Sardis, and in consequence of drinking deep into his unhappy unchristian

temper, have separated from their former communion, with none it seems but hypocrites, who have been profelyted by Winchester, Brothers the lunatic, and Tom Paine; and so the consequence is a most melancholy prospect for us. We are all apostates, unchurched, and not one in a hundred that Christ takes any notice of. It is only the few things which are ready to die, i. e. his followers and such as are of his spirit, that he cares for, pages 10, 11. None remain but these vessels of mercy in the furnace of affliction; we are all (I hope with our eyes open) going over to Popery; and forming coalitions with Socinians, Arians, Sabellians, Arminians, and have said a confederacy to all the other dens of thieves, that we may be found in the worst company this man can place us amongst, pages 14, 40. To what a low ebb has he reduced us! and how high has he exalted himself and his adherents! What a grand mistake are we under, as to the state of the church in our own island, that it is almost, if not quite in vain to go from city to city in search of the word of God. The very consideration of it, is enough to make us tremble, that among the thousands of ministers and churches, we have hoped the Lord is with, and has a people among, we have been mistaken. How deluded we are, if we suffer this man to measure the graces of the churches, and determine the state of their members! Why, sir, this is Muggletonianism revived; which I have been informed, is a damning every one not of that party and sentiment, and pretending to great discoveries and revelations, as Mr. H. does. Truly, my friend, it becomes us, with a prudent zeal, to expose the bible-juggling of this assuming pretender to the judgment of the state of religion in the churches of Christ, and to wrest those sacred pages from his hands, who can thus metamorphose them into any form, and make them speak any thing he chuses; which is a base and wicked spirit, and what no humble and pious man can possibly do.

How much are the credulous of such imaginary constructions to be pitied, who can receive the reveries of his brain, for the instructions of the Holy Ghost! which I am afraid this cunning bible-juggler does not believe himself; but finds such singular expositions of

the sacred words necessary, to keep up that consequence for superior wisdom, the fame of which he has acquired, page 4. and, I am not without my suspicions, to promote the sale of his numerous writings, he has found so productive of wealth.

The fallacy of this exposition of the words is so obvious, that were it not a truth, that *Stultorum plena sunt omnia*, not a moment's hesitation is required, to see the imposition attempted on our judgments. The Holy Spirit tells us the things, are the works which remain, not found perfect before God; or if allowing they were the few faithful ones in Sardis, how, in this sense, can it be typical of the present day? Were they left without a pastor, and destitute of the word of God, obliged to travel about the cities of Asia Minor and all in vain, labouring in bondage and misery, but none to feed them? page 10. Is not the epistle directed to the angel, or the minister that had the care of them? or was he unhappily one of those, who had fallen into the trap of Tom Paine, and so become a wolf, an impostor, a hypocrite? page 18. How consistently he has preserved his analogy, between the type and the anti-type! the one has a pastor who fed them; the other is destitute of the means of grace, quite starved, page 10. Is it to be supposed, that if Sardis is typical of the church in the present day, that the Lord Christ, who has promised to be with his people always, and to feed them by pastors after his own heart, Jer. iii. 15. Eph. iv. 11. and that their eyes shall see their teachers. Is. xxx. 20. that he has so far forsaken them, as to leave them without the bread of life? What greater or more wicked reflection on the management of his kingdom amongst men? which sacred as well as ecclesiastical history inform us, has never been the case in the worst times of the church on earth, and contradict the false reflections he here makes, on the great head of the church himself. Or is it credible, in these words there should be couched this mystery:—That in the latter end of the 17th century, the churches of Christ in Britain, should be reduced so low, as for all large towns in general to be destitute of pastors, who should be able to describe the state of man by nature, and under conviction for sin, or to give them the kind

invitations and encouragements of the gospel, pages 8, 13, 10. but that there would be a W. H. and his followers alone remain in the Sardis state of the church; and upon the testimony of four nobody knows who, we are to receive this wonderful exposition of the words, as discoveries made to this man, which God had not revealed to ages before; and that this information was of such magnitude, as to be printed and dispersed for the instruction of unborn posterity?

For a man to set down deliberately, and that with a view to make mankind believe such imaginations of his own brain are the teachings of the Holy Ghost, and to be evidently at the same time under the influence of a rancorous uncharitable spirit, calling over hypocrites by thousands, and pretending to tell us, that not one in a hundred of us, Christ takes notice of; for these things to be greedily drank in by his deluded hearers, and held up to the world as unprecedented illuminations, appear to me such Satanic delusions, as deserve the deprecations of all serious and godly people. We are then in the best temper of mind, when we imitate him whom we worship. When he saw the multitude, he had compassion on them. And as a shepherd seeketh his sheep in a dark and cloudy day; so did Christ go about to seek and enlarge the company of his followers. Can Mr. H. with any bowels of compassion, see the remains in Sardis quite starved, and not go out after them? Can he continue to enjoy his acquired affluence in the metropolis, by the preaching and printing trade, while such misery is widely diffused all over? Would it not much more become him, to imitate that noble self-denial he may have heard of, in one whom he calls, "a true servant of the Pope, and the son of his handmaid," page 40. i. e. "the whore of Babylon," and commence an itinerant bishop, over these poor small bodies in our Sardis, and no longer see them at the fatigue, trouble, and expence, of going in vain from city to city, from the centre of one county to the centre of almost another? These poor starved souls, labouring in bondage and misery, would be under great obligations to him, and he would surely manifest a more charitable spirit, than living in ease and affluence in a great city. He is commanded to

strengthen them, as he knows where they are, and is so able to describe their state, and administer consolation to them, and their situation is so deplorable, he cannot, without disobedience to the commands of Christ, and sinning against the wonderful light he is favoured with, withhold his immediate compliance to the word: "Strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die." Rev. iii. 2.

What he condemns in Brothers, the same trap he has fallen into himself: Brothers dealt in lunatic visions: he in lunatic voices. And upon the same individual authority, without any hesitation or suspicion of being mistaken, he boldly tells us, that the present scene, and political convulsions of the nations, is the hour of trial mentioned in Rev. iii. 3. and that it was a profound secret of the Lord's 'till he was pleased to make it known; so concealed from all, that no commentator had ever described it; or even *hit the mark* about it, and those who seemed to be the wisest about it, were the farthest from it, page 16. The peculiar honour of having it from the bosom of the Deity by an immediate voice, was reserved for Mr. H. living at the close of the 17th century; who after the exercise of his mind, about this hour of temptation for five years, the Lord told me upon my bed by a voice from heaven, "This is the hour of temptation," and "*I knew the voice, and who it was that spoke it.*" page 16. Upon this authority, sir, we are to receive it, and in consequence look upon Mr. H. as one highly exalted indeed, and to whom this honour is to be ascribed, that of all the painful disinterested ministers of Christ in the present day, none are equal to him, to whom God speaks his mind, not only in the common language of inspiration, but *viva voce*, as to another Moses, only without his meekness. Surely I may be permitted to congratulate my brethren upon such a discovery and method of having their doubts resolved which may have lain long on their minds. That we have now a revival of those days, when great difficulties were solved among the Jews by Bath-kol, the daughter of the voice, a voice from heaven *heard* in an articulate manner: unfortunately the generality of their traditions, and the customs of their nations, by which they fortify themselves against the

gospel of Christ, are founded on this Bath-kol ; so that this method of learning the will of God, must be held in abhorrence by every believer in Christ ; when he sees the effects such voices from heaven produce among them. But the fallacy of such a communication of the Deity, is plain from this consideration alone, that if he or any one was allowed to expound scripture in this manner, what a door is immediately opened for all kind of error, enthusiasm, and deception ? For if it is allowed to Mr. H. to tell us that God spake to us by him, *viva voce*, with a living voice, why not to Mr. Brothers, or any other impostor ? Mahomet tells us so, and the mad Anabaptists told the world so at the reformation, and it has been a common method with a number of pretenders to great and marvellous discoveries in divine things ; especially when the text of scripture has militated against them. If scripture cannot be understood without a voice from heaven, then we have two^d methods of expounding it, a verbal or literary one, and an oral* : for the first the Spirit's illumination is promised, and is the method every humble enquirer after truth applies to. The oral one God has no where promised, nor do any humble persons expect to learn the scriptures this way ; but rather to look upon such pretensions to friendship with the Deity, as pertaining to the depths of Satan, mentioned Rev. ii. 24. What, was there no meaning to these words, before a voice told Mr. H. the meaning of them ? Was it indeed a prediction of the times we live in, and the dispensations of Providence we are under ? He tells us there was not. We were all at a loss to know where the prediction of it stood in scripture, page 16. so that according to his exposition of the words, it had no reference to the times of heathen persecution, that were shortly after to come on the face of the earth, and did come accordingly. The present state of things is more an hour of trial to the governments of the world, and not a time of open persecution to the church of God ; no human government at present appears disposed to molest the privileges of the church of

* By oral here, I mean something delivered by the mouth of God, and so is tantamount to a new Revelation.

Christ, or any of the sects that compose it. Under all the political events, of national confusions that have happened, we have heard of no abridging the liberties of conscience ; or preventing the free exercise of divine worship under any form : for which we are thankful. Is this, I say, an hour of trial, which is certainly intended in this prophecy for the church of God ? certainly not, and if it means otherwise, of political agitations of the earth, and subversion of human governments, such hours of trial have passed over the world frequently since this prophecy was given, and no doubt will again to the end of time. But behold the consistency of this *wild* expositor, even with the assistance of a voice from heaven, he confounds the hour of Sardis's judgment, with the hour of temptation peculiar to Philadelphia. Will he, with the infallibility of one divinely instructed, tell us they mean one and the same thing, after having told us before, that Philadelphia is typical of the universal spread of the gospel ? page 5, which certainly will not be a time of trial to any of the Lord's people. But finding, I suppose, the hour of trial to Philadelphia, at variance with his typical scheme, he has transferred it to Sardis, another evidence of his skill and practice in metamorphosing of the scripture to serve his own turn, and then assures us, the "*what hour,*" which is the passage he is explaining, is the hour of temptation ; and that he had this meaning of Sardis's hour, from God by a voice from heaven : and thus makes the Holy Spirit at variance with himself. The Holy Spirit in the sacred writings, is plain and simple in his instructions. The scriptures were not intended to be explained by mystical allegories, sophistical arguments, or by future voices from heaven. They are in the construction of their language, the use of means, and above all, by the influences of the promised Spirit, able to answer all the purposes of the Christian ministry. They have, in every part, determinate objects to which they are applicable, and not left to the random constructions of conceited enthusiasts, to make what they please with them ; even with the pretence of a voice from heaven. An humble Christian wants no visionary Christs, no audible voices ; the Spirit teaches him to search the scriptures, to believe the promises, to practise the pre-

cepts, and to leave the hidden and mysterious parts of them, till God, in his own time, and the state of the church require the accomplishment of them; and then they will all appear plain, and worthy the wisdom of him, who has his way in the deep waters, and his footsteps not known. "We ought never to content ourselves with a general view of any text, or of the words of it abstractedly considered, but should search out, what is therein chiefly and emphatically intended by the Spirit of God, in such a particular connection." And if so, what juggler in the world, with all the art and sophistry he is master of, can find the French revolution and its consequences, as the hour of temptation, either in Rev. iii. 3d. or 10th verse? He might as well have taken his concordance, and the first place the word hour occurred, have told us it meant the days we live in; or any thing that served Mr. H's turn, and to shew his superior chicanery, in the business of extorting unnatural senses from sacred language.

Let any honest-hearted man of good natural understanding, in the habit of reading his bible, read over Rev. iii. 3. and 10. and then ask him, what he understands by the hour in the first and last place? and I am sure he will reply, it means in the 3d verse, *the uncertain time*, that God would come to chastize the church then existing at Sardis; unless they repented of their cold, luke-warm, and degenerate condition, into which they had fallen; and that it means no determinate time; especially the French revolution at the end of the 17th century: and so is no prediction at all. And in the 10th verse, some fast approaching time, in which some of the members in the church at Philadelphia should then be living, a time of severe persecution, which accordingly came to pass in the days of Trajan, about A. D. 107. and was indeed an hour of temptation to all that dwelt on the face of the earth, or in the Roman empire: and so he might have saved himself the trouble of that great skill he discovers in pages 44, and 45, to confine his hour of temptation to the hearts of hypocrites in gospel Zion. Alas! that men should suffer their common sense to be imposed on, by such expositions of God's word, so foreign to the text and all related to it. What need, indeed, if we are to

believe such a construction of the words, for a living voice from heaven to make us understand them. Was it necessary for an audible voice, to tell us the days we live in are an hour of temptation? Do we not feel they are trying times, when infidelity, luke-warmness, and sensuality are so prevalent? and we can see the traps of error, and the instability of men's minds, which exposes them to the snares which have been laid, to draw us away from the faith and discoveries of Revelation, by artful and designing men. The ordinary means of prayer, reading, and observation, have taught us it is a trying time, and where these suffice, God never gives extraordinary ones: and I believe never a voice from heaven, to teach thousands in the present and future times: a pretension never urged by the apostles, for understanding a single passage of scripture, nor as far as I can recollect, by any *holy* Pope so nearly related to the infallible Mr. H. Is it possible to conceive, that God should suffer the church to be exercised five years with an hour of temptation, and when it did come, that a general enquiry took place to know where it stood in scripture, too curious an enquiry for tempted persons, and too long to occupy the minds of men so anxiously, and of little use to them when known, and that after this period, when the necessity of the information had become in a measure unnecessary, that God should tell the world by a voice to Mr. H. in some close chamber, nobody knows when, or where, that "*This is the hour of temptation.*" Mind, reader, when the heat of this hour has abated, and it is going away, and the information before might have prevented many from falling into traps, and so committing sin, *then* God (I shudder at the thought) is called in to tell the world, in an extraordinary manner, what has no wisdom, utility or design. Surely this man's reason, and religion too, were lulled a-sleep in the arms of pride, to suffer such a daring imposition on men's common sense to slip from his tongue and pen. And I call upon you, sir, and all my brethren, to caution the people against such pretences; in opposition to the plain and primitive meaning of the Holy Ghost in his word: "For men, especially the common people, are easily bewitched with such things,

they having such a shew of high religion, necessary to keep up that ascendancy over the minds of the ignorant, on which their popularity is founded."

I suppose he was well aware, some of his hearers might hesitate to receive his assertion, that he had a voice from heaven; but to give them no room to doubt, he immediately adds, "And I knew it." This, to be sure, would silence every rising incredulity. Who dare controvert a positive declaration, from a man of such peerless illumination among his followers? But would he not have done them an act of kindness, if he had taught them the great secret, of judging the divinity of such a voice, what particular tone and modulation of sound, whether in a loud sonorous accent, or in a low one: that, should ever any of them be indulged with this high privilege, they might be able to distinguish between truth and delusion? With all his egotism and infallibility, we, who have never yet been bewitched, may not only doubt; but venture to deny, that he, or any man, is now in the possession of marks to distinguish the voice of God, heard audibly. For if God had intended any new revelations, discoveries of mysterious passages of scripture, by voices, visions, or otherwise, he would have laid down in his word, sufficient criterions to have judged of the divinity of such things, as he did of old, to judge of prophets, Deut. xviii. but as he has not, *the pretenders* to such things must be looked on in the light of religious impostors. Mr. H. in being so certain it was a voice from heaven, ought to have given us the reasons; that we may know on what grounds he expects to be believed. Is he in possession of secrets, the scriptures, and all good and pious characters, in past and present times are strangers to? Can he, who is continually hearing so many different sounds, and thousands of voices, liable to delusions of imagination, subject to dreams, and after so much writing and preaching, probably afflicted with hypochondriac vapours; amidst all this diversity of sensation, and disorders of fancy, can he distinguish the voice of God, audibly addressed to him? Surely if this is the case, how pertinently he may adopt the words of Balaam: "He hath said which heard the words of God," &c. Numb. xxiv. 4. but, unfortunately, Dr.

Owen supposes that these words are the pretences of this false prophet, and prefatory to his predictions concerning Israel, and that this swaggering introduction, was only to aggrandize himself in the eyes of Balak. For deception will ever need pompous declamation.

The pernicious consequences of allowing such things are not easily imagined, it has been the pretence of all the impostors that ever appeared in the world, who attempted to impose on mankind, things in direct opposition to that sure word of prophecy wherein we do well to take heed, 2 Pet, i. 19. It is by these things, the devil transforms himself into an angel of light; that men may not be afraid of him, but adore him. Was the mischief of such delusions confined only to Mr. H. who informs us, page 58, that he has not a single doubt on his mind, but that this whole epistle speaks to us, and that he believes in his conscience, that God hath given him the *true sense of the Holy Spirit* in what he has written on the subject. I should not have thought it worth while, to have given myself the labour of exposing such nonsense: knowing that a man wise in his own conceits, is a hopeless object to convince of his error, Prov. xxvi. 12. But when this nonsense is held up to the world as extraordinary illumination, and the hearts of the simple are thus beguiled, who can withhold from speaking?

As to his wicked and indiscriminate calumny, on the ministers and professors of the gospel, so plentifully diffused into the language and construction of this sermon, in which he insinuates we are sly seditious persons, disaffected to rulers, have corrupt hearts, rotten principles, guilty of perjury, presumption, walk in craft and deception, &c. page 45. We think it too plain, the language of mere slander to listen to it; knowing that persons of the worst hearts themselves, the sooner conceive and charge evil on others. We have the testimony of our consciences, that all who are truly impressed with the truths of the gospel, *and profess the spirit of it*, will pay attention to the will of God in his word, and be subject to the higher powers. We hope our interest in the kingdom that cannot be moved, and the short uncertain time we can be related to mundane affairs, have set us above the impolicy and

irreligion, of being influenced by Tom Paine's pamphlets, Jacobine newspapers, and lunatic prophecies, and voices from heaven. We are, as professors of the grace of God, too much interested in the truths of revelation, to wish, or be disposed to subvert the government which is friendly to the cause of religion and truth; or to approve, in any government, of those evils, which are opposite to the prosperity of Zion. Our peaceable behaviour, an attention to the duties of our pastoral care, our abhorrence of those infidel principles, which prevail in Europe, and our prayers and endeavours to promote the cause of religion in our own country, and among the heathen, do not correspond with the false insinuations and black calumny of Mr. H. These we leave on the heads of slanderers, to increase the evidences too copious already, that they are better acquainted with the arts of defamation; than the charity that hopeth all things, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil. Could any one, under the influence of this charity, have thrown out a sly insinuation, that the missionaries may have spread disaffection to rulers in the islands of the southern sea, and so rank them with disaffected traders, banished rebels? I could hardly believe my eyes on reading it, thinking it might be the mistake of the printer; but on recollection, I was convinced it was Mr. H's own act and deed, and accorded with the spirit of the whole performance, page 44. Is he ignorant that they have directions to interfere in no matters of government*? Can he suppose that men, with bibles in their hands, should want to destroy subjection to the powers that are, and set up the politics and religion of Tom Paine among untutored heathens; incapable of understanding those things that have merely a relation to the governments of Europe? Does he think that the committee, which have had the care of examining, and re-examining the persons employed in this mission to the southern islands, should choose, and send over persons under the influence of principles subversive of revelation itself; or that *such kind* of persons would ever forsake their country, friends, relations, and every endearing tie of religious and civilized society, to encounter the dangers of the sea, the probability of death,

* See Mr. Bogue's Sermon at Tottenham Chapel, p. 132.

and the inconveniencies of rude uncultivated lands? Without judging the secrets of the heart, which this slanderer hesitates not to do, who cannot see the improbability, that the missionaries should, or may diffuse the principles of Tom Paine, or that they will forbear (as he says, page 44) for self-preservation? Can any man with common sense, after reading such a passage as this, want any further proof, that he is a base, ungenerous calumniator of these missionaries, and that he would not hesitate to excite the jealousy of government against the missionary society, as combining religion and sedition together; and under the covert, of reforming and converting the heathen, had likewise a secret design of subverting human governments, and disseminating the principles of French reformers. Truly, sir, the more I examine the spirit of this wonderful sermon, I am the more convinced of the fallacy and error of the composition, and hardly can refrain myself from thinking the author a stranger to the spirit of the gospel altogether.

As to his positive assertion, that the missionary business is merely human, "Nor does their appearance of life spring from divine things, but from human inventions, such as the missionary business," page 8. it is but another proof, that all I have said in this letter as characteristic of the man, is not ill-natured censure without proof. Would any humble man, whatever fears he might have on his mind, as to the issue of the missionary society, have made such an assertion? Can he be in the knowledge of the various proofs of Divine Providence, smiling on the attempt at least, and not have the suspicion in his breast, that such an assertion would be a hasty imprudent expression, proceeding from the pride and conceit of his own heart? What a human invention, that has the approbation of every pious mind in every part of the world who has heard of it; which has excited the prayers of thousands for its success; which is obedience to the Saviour's command to preach the gospel in all nations; accords with the spirit of the first instruments of its propagation; the subject of so many prophecies;—Is such an attempt a human invention? Why then we may say, preaching the gospel is a human invention; which is attempting

to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God: and so all Mr. H's labours and pains to convert men, and lead them into the paths of truth, have hitherto been mere human inventions. Is Mr. H. in possession of another voice from heaven, telling him this is a human invention; or has he the deep sagacity to know all that has passed in the breasts of those which have had the management of this business, and so charge delusion on their judgments, craft on their principles, and self-interest on their designs?

O what a length, my dear sir, will our folly carry us! and what language are we not capable of using, when we depart from that sense we ought always to retain, of our present ignorance of the works and designs of providence in the world, and the instruments he uses! such a sense has every humble man, Rom. xi. 33, 34, 35, 36; and it teaches him not to be hasty with his words: but he that can do any thing he chooses with the words of God, may think himself at the same liberty to censure the works of men; and as his judgment is infallible, so his words must be without error. He has a key for every secret. He thinks differently, and is differently affected to every other man. A true Diotrophes prating against all others with malicious words, 3 John 10.

I am now got to the close of those remarks I think necessary on this illumined discourse, preached on the never to be forgotten day of October 22, 1798. His best ideas are evidently taken from the writings of others; and it would have been a happy thing for him, if he had made more use of them, than he appears to have done, rather than set up for an expositor above all his brethren for ages that are past. The world then, would not be in possession of such new illustrations, or rather human dogmas his writings abound with. To me it has for some years been a matter of surprize, that such Grub-street titles, and human fancies, mixed with the serious things of God and eternity, should have such a charm with many professors, as to be the means of pouring affluence into the lap of the author of them. O where is that taste for the writings of an Owen, an Hervy, a Whitfield, and a Romaine, that such dogmatical, superficial, allegorical composi-

and the inconveniencies of rude uncultivated lands? Without judging the secrets of the heart, which this slanderer hesitates not to do, who cannot see the improbability, that the missionaries should, or may diffuse the principles of Tom Paine, or that they will forbear (as he says, page 44) for self-preservation? Can any man with common sense, after reading such a passage as this, want any further proof, that he is a base, ungenerous calumniator of these missionaries, and that he would not hesitate to excite the jealousy of government against the missionary society, as combining religion and sedition together; and under the covert, of reforming and converting the heathen, had likewise a secret design of subverting human governments, and disseminating the principles of French reformers. Truly, sir, the more I examine the spirit of this wonderful sermon, I am the more convinced of the fallacy and error of the composition, and hardly can refrain myself from thinking the author a stranger to the spirit of the gospel altogether.

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tions, calculated only to engender a captious and ill-natured spirit, should ever have had any reception among professors; and the sale of them encouraged? Vitiating indeed must their taste be, not to see the want of consistency in them, and the amiable spirit of the gospel; but be taken and led away by bold assertions, quotations of God's sacred word, applied to vulgar witticisms, quaint and airy fancies, combined with scurrility, and vulgar abuse of characters, so that the word of God is made any thing, the writer chooses to palm on his hearers, till the meaning of the Holy Ghost is quite defaced, and truth obliterated. These things appear to me, sir, in a very serious light, and are attended with serious consequences, in promoting a corruption of the scriptures, and so opening a door for false doctrine, false religion, false experiences, and a false spirit, under the cover of an extraordinary zeal for orthodoxy, and what is supposed a contending for the faith; which is nothing more than the contending for a party, keeping ascendancy over uninformed minds, by prejudicing them against other ministers and churches, and feeding them with ungrounded suspicion; that the general body of the professing world, are in a confederacy to corrupt the word of God, and to betray its truths into the hands of its avowed enemies, page 69; *a charge we deny*, and profess to be attached to the doctrines of grace, as laid down in the works of Luther and Calvin, and the doctrinal articles of the church of England; as predestination, election, redemption by the blood of Christ, pardon and peace by his sacrifice, and justification by his righteousness, page 12. What impartial mind, cannot see the drift of all this, to promote self-interest, to feed the pride of a deceitful heart, and keep up that bewitching influence, artfully obtained during a series of years. Could I say any thing to expose this spirit, so contrary to the humble and disinterested spirit of every pious follower of Christ, that would open the eyes of any, not thoroughly blinded with prejudice, and determined to shut every avenue for conviction, I should be happy in the success. To bring them back to the temper of the gospel, and that proper sense, we ought to have of the deceitfulness of the human heart. To estimate

public characters, according to the evidences they give us, of that zeal which connects truth of judgment, with truth of temper; which, while it has the word of Christ in the lips, teaches to speak evil of no man; much less to brand whole societies with infamy, pages 45, 18. while preaching in the name, and as the representative of the meek and lowly Saviour, in a public assembly for religious worship. This, sir, is the design of publishing this letter. He himself is worthy of that silent contempt, he has already met with, AND WILL AGAIN. The sentiments of which, I presume, are those of your mind, and the minds of my brethren in general: sentiments I have not hastily adopted of this Author and his followers, so far as I have had an opportunity of knowing them; but from deliberate and calm consideration, and seeing the effects his writings have produced in several places, to transform peaceable, and apparently humble members, in churches, into agents of contention, and troublers of their professing brethren. I cannot conclude without again observing, that it is *purely on their account*, that these lines appear in print, and is the apology I make to my brethren in the ministry, for ever making any remarks on such a composition of spiritual conceit and unprovoked calumny. That the Lord may convince them of the evil of such a temper, and how undeserved that high veneration is, they have this Author in, is the sincere prayer of,

Dear Sir, your Brother in the Gospel,

RICHARD LEGGETT.

DEAR SIR,

THE contents of your letter, perfectly coincide with my ideas of Mr. H's spirit and publications; especially his sermon entitled, "Discoveries and Cautions from the Streets of Zion," in which he has plentifully poured forth his malevolent spirit, on all denominations of professing Christians, and that without any real provocation, with lying and slander-
ing the ministers of the gospel. Certainly he must

have lost all modesty and tender feeling, or he could not have suffered such a pompous, adulatory, fulsome letter, to stand as a preface to his sermon; which shews he thinks himself the most enlightened and holy man now living, or that has lived for ages past; and that his sermon came from God: but I think I can venture to affirm, it was from the God of this world, who hath blinded his mind through pride and gain, so that he cannot see these inconsistencies in such a character he sustains. Could any man, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, falsify the scriptures in the manner he has done, and then say he received such a palpable misconstruction, by a voice from heaven? so that he is a great prophet indeed! but, before I can believe him as such, I must see better fruit. The spirit of Christ is a spirit of love, meekness, gentleness, and goodness, which is very opposite to his spirit, which has so grossly slandered and vilified the church of God in this performance. If my poor name, can have any weight in recommending your remarks on this sermon, to serious and unprejudiced minds; or may have any effect, to expose to its readers, the unhappy temper manifested in it, so that they may discover the inconsistency of great discoveries in divine things; with the want of humility and the Christian temper, I heartily subscribe myself,

Your Brother in Christ,

HEATHFIELD,
APRIL 14, 1799.

GEORGE GILBERT.

5 MR 64

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